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'Revised labor regs to benefit local workers'

By AGNES E. DONATO
REPORTER

Resident workers may now file a complaint for possible violations of the local preference law and minimum wage requirements.

Employment Services and Training director Alfred Pangelinan yesterday reiterated that contrary to the belief of some sectors, the new labor rules and regulations aim to benefit resident workers, and not only alien labor.

"The new regulations give resident workers more opportunities to secure jobs," Pangelinan said.

For instance, he cited, the new regulations provide a process for resident workers to lodge complaints with the Division of Employment Services if they feel that they have been discriminated against during a hiring process.

"A resident worker may file a complaint with the division for possible violations of the preferential hiring of resident workers and minimum wage requirements," a provision of the new labor rules reads. "If a suspected labor violation is discovered, it shall be reported to the director of Employment Services and the case shall be referred to the director of Labor. Within 30 days upon receipt of any complaint, a determination shall be prepared and finalized for appropriate action."

Further, the new regulations require employers to declare and advertise all benefits provided to an alien worker, along with the job vacancy announcement, in any newspaper and on radio, television or the Internet.

Benefits include regular wage, overtime pay, free

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OLYMPIC FEVER

Volunteers put protective covers on equipment to be used by journalists at the Olympic Aquatic Center during the Athens Olympics in Athens, Greece, Sunday, Aug. 8, 2004. The Athens Olympic games begin on Aug. 13.

AP

A new call for right to vote

Measure would extend franchise to U.S. territories

By MATTHEW HAY BROWN
COURANT STAFF WRITER

U.S. citizens living in the Caribbean are pushing for a constitutional amendment that would give the residents of all American overseas territories—including the CNMI—the right to vote for president.

The movement has emerged not in Puerto Rico, the largest and most politi-

cally vocal territory, but from its smaller, quieter neighbor, the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Though the change would take years, Donna Christian-Christensen, the Virgin Islands' delegate to

Congress, calls it a simple question of fairness—made clearer by the deploy-



Christensen

ment of island soldiers to Afghanistan and Iraq under a commander-in-chief they didn't elect.

"Every conflict this country has been in, we have sent our young men and women to serve or to die in, per capita, some of the highest numbers you will find," said Christian-Christensen, a Democrat. "While our nation is at war, and we're burying our soldiers just like everybody else, I think that maybe it's a

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NMC gives itself two months to resolve accreditation woes

By LIBERTY DONES
REPORTER

Northern Marianas College officials have assured lawmakers that it will be compliant with accreditation standards in just a couple of months.

NMC officials led by president An-

tonio V. Deleon Guerrero said during a meeting with House members Friday that the college is working on a progress report for submission to the Western Association of Schools and Colleges by Oct. 15 this year.

"They [NMC officials] are confident that all concerns on accreditation will

be addressed by Oct. 15," said House Committee on Education chair Rep. Justo Quitugua.

The college was placed this year on warning status by WASC's two accrediting commissions—for Junior and Community Colleges and for Senior Colleges

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Govt, FEMA sign accord on typhoon aid

By LIBERTY DONES
REPORTER

Gov. Juan N. Babauta and Federal Emergency Management Agency coordinating officer William Lokey yesterday signed an agreement for relief and assistance in connection with the damage caused by Typhoon Tinging last June.

The agreement, which provides for a 75-25 fund sharing, came following President Bush's declaration of the CNMI as a major disaster area on July 29.

"This is to implement the President's declaration. It would allow FEMA to set up a shop here and go about the business of ascertaining the extent of damage caused by the

See GOVT on Page 12

Local

AGO probes presence of counterfeiting ring

By JOHN RAVELO
REPORTER

Authorities are probing the possible presence of a ring involved in the circulation of counterfeit \$100 bills in the CNMI.

CNMI chief prosecutor David Hutton said at least one male suspect has already been identified. He refused, however, to reveal the suspect's identity at this time.

The Attorney General's Office is readying criminal charges against the suspect, which could

include counterfeiting, theft by deception, and uttering a forged document.

Hutton said the AGO is looking at the possibility that there could be a counterfeiting ring in the CNMI, as investigation is still ongoing. He said the probe could be completed by Friday.

Hutton said the AGO is also looking at the possibility that counterfeit bills are being

manufactured in the CNMI, although he said this does not appear to be likely.

Police earlier reported about a fake \$100 bill that was used to purchase several items at the Meitetsu Mart. The establishment's staff, however, discovered that the bill was fake.

The counterfeit bill reportedly appeared thicker and darker in color than the authentic one.



Hutton

While the fake bill has a watermark that purports to be a serial number, it does not contain the watermark showing the face of former U.S. President Benjamin Franklin.

The circulation of counterfeit bills prompted the Department of Finance to warn the public about it. The department advised those with suspicions on the authenticity of certain \$100 bills to call the Treasury Department or the Department of Public Safety for assistance.

Adoption of refugee protection regs delayed anew

By AGNES E. DONATO
REPORTER

The Attorney General's Office has extended the comment period on the proposed regulations on refugee protection at the request of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees and the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.

The regulations were supposed

to be adopted at the end of July, when the 30-day comment period ended for the revised version of regulations that were published in the June issue of the Commonwealth Register.

But assistant attorney general Eric S. O'Malley yesterday said that the United Nations and the U.S. Immigration had asked for an extension.

"We received a request from

the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees and the CIS to extend the comment period and allow them to submit their final comments. Also, the attorneys that we sent for training are not back yet," O'Malley said.

The attorneys are receiving training on how to conduct deportation proceedings for refugee protection seekers. They should be able to serve as de

facto judges when they return.

According to O'Malley, another revised version of the regulations will be published in this month's Commonwealth Register. It will incorporate the final comments from the United Nations and the U.S. Immigration Services, which the AGO received only last Friday.

Another 30-day comment period will run before the regulations will be adopted.

The original proposed regulations were published in the Commonwealth Register's May 24 issue. A revised version was printed in June to include recommendations made by the U.S. Immigration Services and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

In an earlier interview, O'Malley said the revisions were mostly technical or clarificatory.

For instance, the wording of "country of origin" has been changed to "designated place of removal."

"[This will apply to an asylum seeker who, for instance,] was coming from China but was a national of North Korea. If they could show that they would be harmed by returning to China, then they would still be eligible for that protection. That was just a clarification to be consistent with international treaties. It was a kind of a language issue more than anything," O'Malley said.

The regulations on persons seeking refugee protection aim to implement Public Law 13-61, which requires the Office of the Attorney General to promulgate rules and regulations enforcing the U.N. Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the U.N. Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

The United States is a signatory to both international conventions and treaties. Pursuant to Section 102 of the Covenant, the CNMI is required to conform to such forms of treaties.

CAMPUS BRIEFS

Kingfishers' PTA meeting, open house today

The William S. Reyes Elementary School will have its Parents-Teachers Association meeting and open house today, Aug. 10, beginning at 5:30pm.

The elementary school said that it would use the occasion to introduce the faculty and staff to the parents as well as discuss the most pressing issues that face the school and students.

The PTA meeting and open house will also see WSR distribute its school calendar and its student/parent handbook.

The PTA meeting will be held at the WSR cafeteria

For more information, call 664-3971/3972 or fax at 664-3973.

NMC math placement test today

The math placement test for the Fall 2004 enrollment at the Northern Marianas College will have its last session today, Aug. 10, at Room D-1, 10am-12pm.

Those who will take the exam are advised to bring a picture ID (should be of acceptable quality as it is needed to be entered into the system); pen/pencils; driver's license; passport; other school picture ID; and CNMI immigration card.

Test takers can also bring a calculator but this is optional and may not be shared with other test-takers.

If you have any questions call the Languages & Humanities Dept. at 234-3690 Ext. 2000/2603.

GTC Elementary School PTA meeting tomorrow

The Parents-Teachers Association president of the Gregorio T. Camacho Elementary School is informing parents and guardians of its students that they will have their first PTA/Parents' Night tomorrow, Aug. 11, at 6pm.

"We encourage all parents/guardians to come meet your children's teachers and be informed of what your children are expected to learn for the school year at the grade level they're in," the school said in a statement.

HJHS to hold PTSA meeting

Hopwood Junior High School will be having its first Parents-Teachers-Students Association meeting for the 2004-05 school year this Thursday, Aug. 12, 6-7pm in the school's cafeteria.

Head Start orientation schedule out

The Head Start Program is scheduled to open for orientation on August 12 and 13, 2004. Teachers are currently contacting parents/guardians about their child's scheduled orientation dates and times. Should parents/guardian's not have a contact number visit or call your child's center or the main office on Capitol Hill to obtain your schedule. During the orientation, please allow for at least two to three hours of your time to be spent with your child and teacher. For more information, call your center or the main office at 664-3751 or 664-3768.

St. Remedios school opening

The St. Remedios Early Childhood Development Center School has announced its opening dates.

Three-year-old students will have their first day of school on Wednesday, Aug. 18. School for 4-year-olds will begin the next day, Thursday, Aug. 19, while 5-year-olds will have their opening on Friday, Aug. 20.

On Aug. 23, Monday, all students of St. Remedios will all come to school. Students should come to school before 7:30am and parents are requested to pick up their children no later than noon.

If you have any questions, contact St. Remedios at 234-6247 or 234-6244.

labor

Island Snapshots

The Saipan Tribune accepts contributed pictures of birthdays, weddings, baptisms, and other community and family events for free publication. Material submitted should be original and not copyrighted, in digital or print format. Must include a caption containing complete details (a description of the event, identities of the persons in the picture, the date, and the place), the name of the contributor, and a contact number. The Saipan Tribune reserves the right to edit the caption, the date of publication and the size of the picture. Contributors can e-mail their submissions to editor.tribune@gtcpacific.net. To check if contributions are received, call 235-6397, 235-2440, or 235-8747.

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HEROES

COMMUNITY

Briefs

Important dates for FRG members

The Family Readiness Group of the Echo Company 100th Battalion, 442nd Infantry would like to inform all Reservists and families of the following important dates:

- Aug. 11, 6pm @ Mt. Carmel Cathedral—Special Mass for our reservists. Families and friends are welcome to attend this special Mass.
- Aug. 17-20 @ Reserve Center, Puerto Rico—New issue and/or renewal of military ID card. Families of active, Reserve or veteran soldier(s) should get a new or renew their military ID cards at the Reserve Center.

For more information, call Cil Blas/FRG Leader at 323-4675 (evenings). Show your support for our troops by turning on your headlights on Aug. 11.

Attention to all veterans on Tinian

A representative from the CNMI Office of Military and Veterans Affairs will visit Tinian on Aug. 11, 12, and 13. All veterans and family of veterans who are interested in applying for Veterans Administration benefits are encouraged to meet with Ruth Coleman, veteran representative from Saipan at the Retirement Office on Tinian from 9am to 4pm. Coleman will also give an overview of Veterans Administration programs and services, as well as conduct/assist disabled veterans open or follow up on their VA cases.

For more information, contact the Office of the Military and Veterans Affairs on Saipan at 664-2650 or Annie at the Tinian Retirement Office, 433-3863.

NMPASI public forum set

The Northern Mariana Islands Protection & Advocacy Systems Inc., which administers the Protection & Advocacy for Individuals with Mental Illness, Protection & Advocacy for Developmental Disabilities, Protection & Advocacy for Assistive Technology, Protection & Advocacy for Traumatic Brain Injury, Protection & Advocacy for Individual Rights, Client Assistance Program, and Protection & Advocacy for Beneficiaries for Social Security, wishes to invite all CNMI residents to a public forum for comments on its fiscal year 2005 Statement of Objectives and Priorities.

The public hearings are scheduled for the following dates:

- Tinian—Aug. 11, Mayor's Office Conference Room, 6pm
- Rota—Aug. 12, Roundhouse Songsong Village, 6pm
- Saipan—Aug. 13, NMPASI Conference Room, 6pm

Joeten-Kiyu acquires audio CD collection

The Joeten-Kiyu Public Library has received a large collection of audio CDs, which are now available to the public.

The CDs may be borrowed for up to seven days with a Joeten-Kiyu Library card. They cover a diverse range of musical genres including classical, country, pop, rock, jazz, and others. There is something for everyone. This new audio collection was acquired through the efforts of the Attorney General's Office in a lawsuit against the music distribution industry. The public is encouraged to take advantage of the new collection.

UPAA moves raffle draw date

The University of the Philippines Alumni Association CNMI Chapter has moved the June 12 fundraising raffle draw to Aug. 14, Saturday.

Those who have not yet purchased tickets are encouraged to do so. Proceeds will go to the UPAA's "Donate a Classroom Project" in the Philippines, and will help recognize and support deserving CNMI students.

The Aug. 14 raffle drawing will be held at the POLO office, 1st Floor of Nauru Building in Susupe, 6pm.

Registration open for anger management

The Community Guidance Center will begin the next session for its Anger Management Program on Aug. 18 from 1pm to 2:30pm in the N-5 Building in Navy Hill.

The program is an ongoing eight-week session, conducted every Wednesday of the week.

Several clients are referred to the program through the court; others are volunteer participants from the community.

For more information on the program or to register call the Community Guidance Center at 323-6567. Identities of participants will be kept confidential.

Torres offers free notarial services

Former congressman Stanley T. Torres, who is also a notary public, is offering free notarial services to all U.S. Army Reservists and their dependents.

Torres can be contacted through the offices of:

- Rep. Heinz Hofschneider 664-6969
- Rep. Jesus Attao 664-8822
- Rep. David Apatang 664-8980

Or in an emergency 287-9255

FLIGHT SCHEDULES FOR AUGUST 9, 2004											
DEPARTURES						ARRIVALS					
Saipan-Tinian						Tinian-Saipan					
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‘Nursing program should also be given importance’

By **LIBERTY DONES**
REPORTER

CNMI Scholarship Office board chair Roman Benavente said equal weight must also be given to nursing—not just teacher and police programs—to address the lack of personnel in essential services in the CNMI.

Benavente made the comment following the House Committee on Education’s move to extend for another five years the soon-to-expire postsecondary teacher education program.

“I have no problem with that but what I want to see is that

kind of interest for the nursing program to encourage our students to take up nursing and address the shortage [of nurses] in the Commonwealth,” said Benavente, who is also chair of the Board of Education.

The House Committee on Education has recommended the extension of the teacher scholarship program, which expires on Sept. 3, acknowledging that the government must continue building up its pool of local teachers.

The scholarship program aims to encourage more CNMI scholars to take up edu-

cation and work as teachers in CNMI schools.

The House has also moved to allocate over \$24,000 in unclaimed lottery prizes for the teacher education program.

A bill was also introduced providing that all unclaimed prizes shall be deposited in the postsecondary teacher education program scholarship

account, to be created by the Secretary of Finance.

Benavente said the teacher program has been successful in that more local teachers are now part of the Public School System.

“The teacher academy is really effective but let’s not forget the other requirement for nurses and even police. With [the] police, we already have this

police academy,” he said.

Benavente said his office supports the Department of Health’s proposal for the creation of a nursing academy that would provide scholarships to students taking up nursing or health-related academic programs.

“We continue to meet with DPH Secretary [James U.] Hofschneider on that issue,” he said.

The government hospital began to directly hire nonresident nurses this year to address a shortage in its nursing staff. This has prompted some local nurses to complain over “discrimination” in terms of salary packages.

Local nurses said that while they are not against the foreign-hired nursing staff, they cannot settle for a lower pay rate.

FTC has no action yet on gas prices complaint

By **JOHN RAVELO**
REPORTER

Nearly four months after the CNMI complained about Mobil gas stations’ high retail prices on the islands, the Federal Trade Commission has yet to take concrete action on the complaint.

To date, CNMI consumer counsel Brian Caldwell said the FTC has yet to communicate with his office, which filed a letter complaint listing the prices of gasoline on all Mobil stations on the islands.

Caldwell had sought the FTC’s assistance in ascertaining whether or not anomalies in trade practices are actually occurring in the Marianas.

The complaint listed down 10 Mobil gas stations on Saipan, which had uniform prices for regular and premium gasoline. Mobil gas stations on the islands then retailed regular and super gasoline at \$2.539 and \$2.629 per gallon at full-serve rate. Self-serve rate for regular and super gasoline was at that time \$2.329 and \$2.429, respectively.

By then, Mobil’s cumulative gallon price adjustment for the year was already 22 cents. The cumulative gallon price increase to date has reached 31 cents.

Caldwell said, though, that no consumer has actually filed a formal complaint before his office against retail prices of both Mobil and Shell gasoline. He also noted the high prices of

oil in the world market.

“We’re generally impacted,” Caldwell said. He said he was uncertain if the price adjustments implemented by Mobil and Shell were reasonable. He refused to comment if there is any investigation being conducted at the moment.

Just last week, Shell and Mobil gas stations raised gallon prices again by 4 cents.

The new round of price increases by Shell is its sixth for the year. It first raised gallon prices by 7 cents in January, before increasing them again by 5 cents three times, and then 3 cents two months ago, before the new 4-cent hike. Shell’s cumulative gallon price adjustment for the year has now reached at least 29 cents.

Mobil, meanwhile, has raised pump prices seven times since January this year, increasing gallon prices first by 3 cents, and then 4 cents, before taking on four rounds of 5-cent adjustments and the new 4-cent hike—resulting in the 31-cent cumulative gallon price adjustment for the year.

The Attorney General’s Office has joined the FTC’s national gas price-monitoring campaign. According to the AGO, complaints about gas prices could be sent by email to attorneygeneral@saipan.com or in writing to this address: Office of the Attorney General-Civil Division, Caller Box 10007, Capitol Hill, Saipan, MP96950.

Recognition of deployed servicemen continues

Since May 25, 2004, Rep. Claudio K. Norita has highlighted the service of deployed U.S. military personnel from the CNMI. Every Tuesday and Thursday on page three of the Saipan Tribune, Norita’s office sponsors an ad campaign celebrating the service of US military personnel hailing from Saipan, Tinian and Rota.

Norita’s ad campaign, dubbed “CNMI Heroes: Fighting against tyranny, defending freedom and democracy,” is also co-sponsored by House Speaker Benigno R. Fitial, Vice Speaker Timothy P. Villagomez, and Rep. Ray N. Yumul.

Norita and his colleagues are sponsoring the ads to pay trib-

ute to the service and sacrifices of CNMI residents who have enlisted in the U.S. armed forces and are stationed overseas. “I think it is very important for us to recognize the patriotic contributions of our local servicemen and women, and let them know how much we care about them, so that their morale remains high.”

As part of this morale boosting campaign, Norita’s office continues to invite family members of deployed U.S. servicemen to submit names and photographs of loved one currently serving abroad, particularly in Afghanistan and Iraq. All information should be referred to Norita’s office for publication (664-8987).

NMC to orient new students on Wednesday

The Northern Marianas College will begin orientation for all new students on Aug. 11, to include the introduction of the newly appointed president, Antonio V. Deleon Guerrero.

The orientation will be held at the student center from 8:30am to 12:30pm.

The students will also be introduced to several faculty members and staff of the college, including Dean for Student Development Kurt Barnes and Jack Kiyoshi, president of the Associated Students of NMC.

They will also be toured around campus, visiting the NMC bookstore, counseling, career center, cantina, president’s office, library, office of admissions record and financial aid, student support services, TV and film studio, computer lab, and the gym.

The activities will include a digital slideshow presentation from the Office of Student Activities and Leadership. The slideshow will feature annual events held at the college.

In a separate activity, students will be required to bring athletic shoes with them to participate in the ROPES and Team-building exercises in the gym.

“Students will just need comfortable clothing and athletic shoes for [the] exercises in the gym,” said Adrayanne Sablan, program coordinator for OSAL.

Ed Calvo will be facilitating

these exercises and the activities will be tailored to help new students adjust and succeed in college, she added.

Orientation will continue on Aug. 12 with information on the counseling program and services and college success strategies.

“College success strategies will focus on time management and college success tips to help new students have a successful first

year in college and meet the challenges during their college experience at NMC,” said Sablan.

Also included in the activity will be the NMC student email sign-up, where students will be informed on activities and issues facing the college though their email account. Picture-taking for student ID cards will be held at the student center soon after.

The orientation will kick off

with a barbeque party hosted by the NMC family in honor of the new students. Ace Elameto will be on hand to provide entertainment for the event.

“Some faculty will be barbecuing. This is something new, to increase faculty and student interaction,” said Adryann Joe Sablan.

New students are urged to attend the orientation. *(Cassie DLG. Fejeran)*

CARS UNLIMITED

NMC

NMC

Yumul backs 2nd Rose Bowl participation if...

Rep. Ray N. Yumul yesterday clarified his position on the CNMI's participation in the Rose Bowl Parade, saying he would only support the project if the administration could identify its own funding for the project.

Yumul, who chairs the House Committee on Commerce and Tourism, maintains that he would not be willing to take away funds from tax rebates or government scholarships to fund the CNMI's participation in the next California Rose Bowl Parade.

"I support the general concept of tourism promotion," said Yumul. "But I might differ



Yumul

on the specific application of that concept."

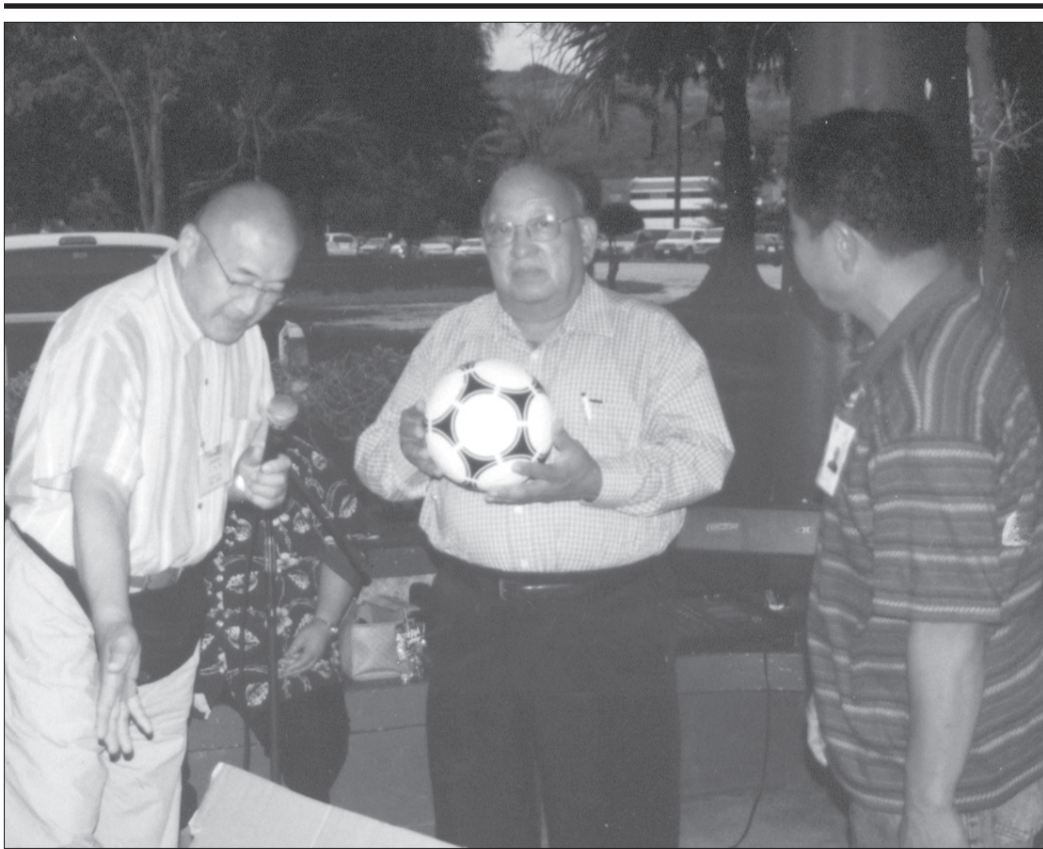
Yumul stressed the need to be mindful of the government's limited

financial resources and urges the Babauta administration to "strategically allocate our scarce resources so as to produce the greatest financial returns."

Yumul adds that he would not mind aggressively promoting the CNMI to Europe and North America if the Commonwealth had more economic resources at its disposal. "But under current economic conditions we have to be more realistic and exercise more prudence by necessity," he said.

Although Yumul believes that more tourism promotion funds should be given to the Marianas Visitor's Authority, he is still willing to support the administration's second Rose Bowl Parade, but only if the governor can identify funds without compromising the funding of essential government services and operations.

Yumul, a member of the U.S. Army Reserve, is scheduled for overseas deployment and will not be able to accept Babauta's appointment as chairman of the CNMI Rose Bowl Committee. He indicated, however, that he was honored by the nomination and might have accepted were it not for his military service obligations.



PLAY BALL

Saipan Mayor Juan B. Tudela holds a soccer ball presented by Japan's Sanpo-En high priest Kayaki Kansho at the appreciation and sayonara party hosted by the mayor last Monday night, Aug. 2, for the Sanpo-En Student Cultural Exchange students who spent six days on the island. From left, Kansho, Tudela, and mayor's staff Hiroshi Sakamoto.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

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AmeriCorps recruiting 34 members

The Public School System's AmeriCorps program—a federally funded program—is currently recruiting 34 members to participate in the community service and educational program.

AmeriCorps members will provide tutoring and mentoring services to CNMI youths between the ages of 6 and 17 at various youth centers. Members will assist students during structured youth cen-

ter activities that may include homework assistance, arts/crafts, sports activities/events, computer trainings, etc.

"Committed and dedicated members will provide positive role modeling to students from various backgrounds," the PSS statement said.

Members will be awarded a living stipend for 900 hours served; and educational award of \$2,362 after successful completion of program; de-

velopmental trainings and workshops; and satisfaction of serving the youth and community in the CNMI.

The scope of work will include tutoring and mentoring assistance to the youth; assisting in youth program activities; and serving in non-profit community events.

Those who want to participate in the program should be U.S. citizens, at least 17 years old, a high school graduate,

and is drug free and possesses a clean police clearance.

Application and proof of eligibility requirements must be submitted by Aug. 18, 2004.

For applications, contact AmeriCorps Program, CNMI Public School System Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment Office, Retirement Fund Building, 2nd Floor, Capitol Hill, Saipan; or call 664-3716/32; or email tenoriod@pss.cnmi.mp.

cuc meet

hearing

MVA's Benavente, NMC's Guerrero to join MY WAVE beach cleanup

Marianas Visitors Authority managing director Vicky Benavente, Northern Marianas College president Tony V. DeLeon Guerrero, and NMC tourism instructor Larry Lee will be participating in this Saturday's MY WAVE Club beach cleanup, according to the Marianas Tourism Education Council.

Also, MTEC said several members of the Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands have promised to help provide meals and drinks to the estimated 60 students and MY WAVE Club advisers who would join the event. They are Dai-Ichi Hotel, World Resort-Saipan and Saipan Grand Hotel.

Benavente, Guerrero and Lee are members of the MTEC board. Other members expected to be at the event are Public School System associ-

ate commissioner Rita Sablan; Ernst & Young partner James Whitt; Yoichi Matsumura, general manager of Pacific Development Inc., a travel and tour agency; and Pacific Islands Club's director for sports and entertainment activities Jon Cramer.

"Beach cleanups help maintain the island's beauty and promote tourism. This activity is also an opportunity for everyone, including our young students, to get better insights on the importance of tourism to the CNMI through the exposure it provides them," said Benavente.

Besides cleaning the beach, MY WAVE Club members would also be greeting tourists at hotels along their way. Cleanup area is from Sugar Dock to World Resort Saipan. Assembly time is 7:30am.

The activity, the first to be

held by the tourism clubs for this school year, was spearheaded by the Marianas High School MY WAVE Club through its adviser, Tim Faska. Other MY WAVE Clubs that will join the event are those from Gregorio T. Camacho Elementary School in Tanapag, William S. Reyes Elementary School in Chalan Kanoa, Oleai Elementary School in Oleai, and Hopwood Junior High School in San Antonio.

MY WAVE Clubs were formed by MTEC in coordination with PSS to help promote tourism from the grassroots. Supporters include HANMI and other members of the private sector, among them DFS-Saipan, Tan Holdings Corp. and Ernst & Young.

"Everyone is invited to join the event and support the MY WAVE Clubs," an MTEC statement said. (PR)

name the mall

Business

WTO treaty talks come down to the wire

By NAOMI KOPPEL
AP WRITER

GENEVA (AP)—Government ministers from around the globe gather this week at the World Trade Organization for an 11th-hour attempt at a treaty they hope will provide a massive boost to the world economy.

They face huge differences of opinion, however, especially in the key area of agriculture, where rich and poor nations have vastly different agendas and exporters and importers have conflicting priorities.

"At a time when projectionist pressures lie just below the surface, when people across the world are demanding change, the 147 member governments of the WTO must deliver," said WTO Director-General Supachai Panitchpakdi.

Negotiators were meeting privately night and day to try to find an agree-

ment before the July 31 deadline. Formal meetings start Tuesday.

The framework should have been completed last September at a ministerial meeting in Cancun, Mexico, which collapsed without agreement. Negotiators then planned to do it by Christmas—but that deadline came and went.

If negotiators fail to reach a deal by the end of July, they realize the U.S. presidential election and government changes in other countries will leave them paralyzed until at least next year.

The treaty framework will form the structure of continued negotiations in the current "round" of trade talks. Though it is only part of the process, many believe this agreement is the crucial one and that the rest of the talks will be much smoother.

Along with Shotaro Oshima—the Japanese ambassador who heads the WTO's ruling General Coun-

cil—Supachai on July 16 produced a 15-page proposal on the structure of a future treaty.

On the key issue of agriculture, the document sets out a system ensuring that high import tariffs are cut by a larger percentage than low ones—a key demand of many agricultural exporters.

However, it also leaves room for nations to make smaller cuts on products they consider "sensitive"—often, products that are important in their domestic farming industry.

The document is short on details, saying simply that the exact formula to be used "remains under negotiation."

The proposal says all agricultural export subsidies will be eliminated by a date "to be agreed," a concession made by the European Union, which had originally refused to accept total elimination of the payments.

At the same time, the United States, Canada and others must get rid of their

own programs of support for agricultural exporters, it says.

The proposal was mostly welcomed, but some countries—notably a group of importers led by Switzerland and Japan—still say they have big problems with the text. They submitted a set of amendments, but those likely will be unacceptable to other WTO members.

The British development charity Oxfam also attacked the proposal, saying it had been subject to "considerable rich-country influence" and did not sufficiently consider the demands of poorer nations.

"Developing countries are being put in the untenable position of having to choose either to agree to a watered-down framework or accept the blame for the collapse of the talks," said Oxfam spokeswoman Celine Charveriat.

EU member France also has criticized the proposal and accused EU Trade Commissioner Pascal Lamy

of giving too much ground over export subsidies.

One major breakthrough in recent days came when a group of African countries dropped their demands for separate negotiations on eliminating rich countries' subsidies on cotton they claim are destroying the livelihoods of African farmers.

They said they would agree to talk about cotton within the overall agricultural talks but only if specific deadlines are set for removing subsidies.

Other areas to be covered in the treaty include cutting barriers to trade in manufactured goods and service industries like telecommunications and banking, and harmonizing and simplifying customs procedures.

All WTO members agree in principle that cutting barriers to international trade, including import taxes and government subsidies, is good for the world economy.

Gas prices dip as refinery projects end

CAMARILLO, Calif. (AP)—Gas prices dropped slightly in the past two weeks as refineries finished projects that temporarily caused a dip in production, an industry analyst said Sunday.

The weighted national average price for all three grades of gasoline fell a little less than a penny between July 9 and Friday to \$1.95 per gallon, said Trilby Lundberg, who publishes the semimonthly Lundberg Survey. The

survey polls nearly 8,000 gas stations across the United States.

That represents a drop of 15.4 cents per gallon since May 21, when the average price was slightly above \$2.10 a gallon.

The biggest seller in the two-week period was self-serve regular, which averaged \$1.92 per gallon. Mid-grade gasoline averaged \$2.02 per gallon, while premium averaged \$2.11 per gallon.

Lundberg said refineries had finished

several projects designed to maximize output for summer travel, leading to the drop in prices. She said an increase in crude oil prices prevented prices from falling even further.

The lowest average price for a gallon of self-serve regular was \$1.74, in Tulsa, Okla. The highest average price for self-serve regular was in Honolulu, where consumers are paying \$2.25 per gallon.



RAV4 rates high with optional air bags

WASHINGTON (AP)—The 2004 Toyota RAV4 got the highest ratings on both front and side crash tests performed by the insurance industry, but only when tested with its optional side air bags, according to crash test results released Sunday.

The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety said the RAV4 was the first vehicle to earn its "best pick" designation for both front and side tests. The institute began performing side-impact crash tests last year.

When tested without its side-impact air bags, however, the RAV4 received the institute's lowest rating of poor in the side test.

Adrian Lund, chief operating officer of the Insurance Institute, said he hoped the results would encourage Toyota

and other manufacturers to make head-protecting side air bags standard.

Toyota spokeswoman Martha Voss said she did not know whether the company would make air bags standard on the RAV4. It now costs \$680 for the option, which includes a head-protecting air bag that deploys from the ceiling and a side-protecting air bag that deploys from the seat.

The Insurance Institute tests the performance of vehicles in a 31-mph side crash. Lund said the 2003 RAV4, which did not offer optional side air bags, had poor structure and failed to protect the crash dummy's head. Toyota strengthened the structure of the 2004 RAV4 along with adding the side air bags option.

Lund stressed that head-protecting air bags can reduce by 45 percent

chances of serious injury in a crash, while side air bags, designed to protect the chest and abdomen, reduce chances of injury by only 10 percent.

Toyota also made structural improvements to the front of the RAV4 which helped the vehicle withstand the institute's 40-mph frontal crash test, Lund said.

The 2004 RAV4 got the highest side-impact safety rating from the government even though it was tested without its air bags. Institute spokesman Russ Rader said the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration uses a barrier that represents a car, while the institute's barrier represents a sport utility vehicle. He said NHTSA also doesn't include the amount of head injury in its calculations.

Some doubt American Airlines' strength

By DAVID KOENIG
AP BUSINESS WRITER

FORT WORTH, Texas (AP)—After staving off bankruptcy a year ago, American Airlines slashed costs below many of its competitors and its executives talked brightly about returning the largest U.S. carrier to its former glory.

Analysts praised American, which eked out a tiny profit from April to June—only its second winning quarter in three years of crushing losses. Investors bid the stock price up for a time.

Now, however, fresh doubts emerge about American's ability to regain its strength against the tide of high fuel prices, which have wiped out hope that the carrier might earn a profit this year, and an onslaught of competitors pushing low fares even lower.

More ominously, there is scant evidence that American, a unit of Fort Worth-based AMR Corp., has figured out how to win customers away from other carriers and boost revenue. American now faces competition from low-cost rivals on nearly 90 percent of its routes, frustrating the company's plans to raise fares.

And, some employees are growing restless a year after taking huge pay cuts that helped save the airline.

Flight attendants pepper Internet chat rooms with complaints about being overworked because thousands of colleagues have been laid off. Attendants on long international flights said they were denied meal and rest breaks because crews were understaffed. They filed a complaint through the union, and an arbitrator ruled in their favor—awarding back pay of \$9 million to \$14 million, which the airline must pay in October.

Phillip Baggaley, an analyst with Standard & Poor's, says the pace of American's recovery "is disappointing and may be stalling out."

Just a year ago, American was at the breaking point after more than \$6 billion in losses caused by the reces-

sion, the terror attacks of September 2001, tougher competition from low-cost carriers, and fundamental changes in the way that people buy airline tickets.

The company was on the brink of filing for bankruptcy protection until union employees barely approved a package of painful concessions, including layoffs and double-digit pay cuts that saved American \$1.8 billion a year.

With those cuts, the company reduced spending on wages, salaries and benefits by 16 percent through the first six months of 2004.

In early 2003, American had the second highest cost structure in the U.S. airline industry. One year later, American's cost structure was the lowest of the six so-called legacy carriers, the others being United, Delta, Continental, Northwest and US Airways.

American is still not lean compared to low-cost carriers. Southwest Airlines' cost structure is 15 percent lower than American's; JetBlue's is 38 percent lower.

The savings helped AMR cut its first-quarter loss to \$166 million from the \$1 billion loss a year earlier, and to post a \$6 million profit in April-June period. Analysts expect another small profit in the current quarter, which ends Sept. 30.

"American is off the critical list," says CEO Gerard Arpey, who sometimes lugs a small, rectangular sheet of metal with holes in it to employee rallies and meetings with Wall Street analysts to prove that American is committed to cutting bloated costs.

The grill provides the foundation for airplane seats. Until recently, American bought the supports for about \$1,000 apiece. Now, employees make them for \$157.

Fourteen-dollar Italian blankets offered to customers during flights were replaced with \$8 throws from China, and American saved \$600,000 on silverware by buying plastic utensils in an Internet auction.

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EDITORIAL

Chuuk businesses get tough with government

HAGATNA, Guam (PDN, PIR)—Since June 15, businesses in the Chuuk Chamber of Commerce have refused to pay sales tax and have put the money meant for the tax into an escrow account.

Chuuk's Chamber said the businesses would continue to do so until the Chuuk government meets a set of demands regarding past-due vendor payments and alleged procedural violations by the government.

Chuuk Governor Ansito Walter, who was in Guam over the weekend to brief the Chuukese community here about the state of the Chuuk government, said

that he is working with the Chamber on a compromise. He also said he plans to pay the debts owed as soon as the government has the cash, hopefully within the next two months.

Walter and Chuuk acting Attorney General Maketo Robert said the Chamber's actions are under legal review.

"Establishing an escrow account is contrary to the language of the law of the state of Chuuk," Robert said.

The account, and a possible lawsuit against the government, are part of the Chamber's new "tough love" policy, Aten said, which is aimed at improving

the financial situation of small businesses in Chuuk by obtaining money owed to them by the government.

"The government is like a drunk brother who comes to your house asking for money," Aten said. "You give them money and then he spends it on alcohol. 'Tough love' is about putting your arm around your brother, refusing to give him money."

In response, Walter said "the constitution is clear" on the requirement to pay sales taxes, but he hopes to come to a compromise without needing to "go for the last resort."

REVISED

From Page 1

food, transportation, room and board, commissions, bonuses, and training.

Pangelinan expressed hope that the inclusion of benefits resident workers in the JVA will encourage more resident workers to apply for jobs in the private sector.

Employers requesting a waiver of the JVA, the 20-percent resident workforce, and one-to-one job ratio requirements must first post their job openings at, and get certification from, agencies such as the Office of Vocational Re-

habilitation, Workforce Investment Agency, Adult Basic Education, and the Adult Development Institute.

"This certification does not guarantee an approval of a request, but will be made as part of the employers' good faith efforts to locate available and qualified resident workers," Pangelinan said.

When a referral or placement of a qualified and available resident worker is made by any of the mentioned government agencies, the JVA will be on pending status until the employer responds.

The employer has 14 days to submit the written response, which must include information such as the type

of action taken, decision on whether to hire or not, reasons for disqualifying the applicant, and benefits that the employer intends to provide the applicant.

Pangelinan said the employer may be asked to justify his or her reasons for disqualifying a referred applicant.

If the employer fails to respond within the 14-day period, the division will conclude that the applicant has been hired and a JVA certification is no longer needed.

The same process applies to employers who intend to hire non-resident workers for a secondary job, Pangelinan added.

Summary of changes in Alien Labor Rules and Regulations:

- All benefits provided to workers must be included in job vacancy announcements;
- DES certifies employer solvency or the Division of Labor will deny a work permit application;
- Resident workers may file complaints for violations of preference or minimum wage;
- Employers must submit a Nonresident Employment Agreement annually;
- Applications for nonresident work permit must include sworn statement that no other agreement exists between the employer and alien worker;
- Applications must include a waiver of confidentiality concerning records in possession of other government agencies, for the Labor Department to use for enforcement purposes;
- A \$5 penalty is imposed each day for correction of deficiency in applications;
- Bonds from unsound surety providers may be rejected;
- Minimum amount of coverage provided by bonds must be increased;
- Alternatives to bonding may be posted;
- Sanctions may be imposed for cancellation of bond without authorization from Labor;

- Renewal applications must include a Nonresident Employment Agreement and a statement that wages owed to the employee have been paid;
- Reauthorization is allowed for entry of new employee up to 180 days;
- Processing of applications will be suspended while investigation is ongoing;
- Employers barred from hiring non-resident workers will be named on a "barred" list;
- Process for applications of employers with pending investigation;
- Employer or employee may request a reduction or increase of work hours;
- Immediate relative of an alien worker requirements;
- Employers must check with DES if a nonresident worker is available on-island before bringing in a replacement worker;
- Replacement of a worker after consensual transfer is now determined by two factors: (a) the number of workers employed, and (b) the number of consensual transfers granted to the employer within the past 12 months. For every 25 workers employed, an employer may replace only one employee lost through consensual trans-

- fer in the 12-month period. If an employer has less than 25 employees, the employer may be granted a replacement for one worker lost through consensual period in any one-year period.
- Replacement is limited to one for each worker that departs or transfers;
- Multiple employment authorization procedures include JVA certification, payment of fees, and submission of new forms;
- A maximum of 16 hours in a 30-day period is allowed for casual employment;
- Temporary transfers for garment, hotel and construction industries are effective for a maximum for 6 months;
- Reallocation of workers in the garment industry;
- U.S. Occupational Safety and Health's code of federal regulations are recognized as the minimum standard for workplace conditions required of every CNMI employer;
- Both employer and employee are now required to provide 30-day notice of intent to renew or not renew employment;
- Mediation process;
- Administrative hearing rules;
- Fee changes; and
- Temporary work permit procedures.

agency declaration was based on damage resulting from flooding, high surf, high winds, and wind-driven rain associated with Typhoon Tingting on June 27 to 29, 2004.

The federal assistance under the agreement is limited to Saipan, Tinian, and Rota. All the three islands are eligible for public assistance and hazard mitigation grant program.

The Northern Islands' eligibility, according to Lokey, is under review.

Further, the agreement provides for a 75 percent federal funds share of total eligible costs for public assistance and 75 percent share for hazard mitigation measures "that could substantially reduce the risk of future damage, hardship, loss or suffering in any area within the Commonwealth."

Recent reports put the preliminary

damage assessment conducted by the CNMI and the FEMA on Saipan and Tinian at over \$2.53 million.

Of this estimate, some \$650,000 would be needed to restore utilities; \$350,000, roads and bridges; \$250,000, buildings and equipment; \$210,000, parks and recreational facilities; \$150,000, water control facilities; and \$77,000, debris clearance. Some \$82,000 would cover overtime pay of government personnel during response and recovery efforts after the typhoon.

Villagomez said the typhoon left major damage on Tinian and Rota's port facilities.

On Saipan, major damage were reported affecting the hospital and utilities. She said that damage on Beach Road will be reassessed.

A NEW

From Page 1

timely point at which to introduce this."

The proposed amendment, which Christian-Christensen outlined in a joint resolution co-sponsored last month by her counterparts in American Samoa and Guam, would extend voting rights to the 4.3 million U.S. citizens living in those territories, Puerto Rico and the Northern Mariana Islands.

Absent among the co-sponsors is Anibal Acevedo Vila, who represents 3.9 million of those citizens in Congress as resident commissioner of Puerto Rico—where any effort to gain the presidential vote is likely to get caught up in the divisive debate over the island's political relations with the United States.

Staff members of the two delegates have discussed the proposal, and Christian-Christensen is hoping for Acevedo Vila's support. Acevedo Vila's pro-commonwealth party has criticized past efforts by statehood supporters in Puerto Rico to obtain the presidential vote. Now running for governor, he could not be reached for comment.

The measure faces other obstacles, including unresolved questions about how the territories would be counted in the electoral college, whether residents would then have to pay federal income tax, and the likelihood that Republicans, who control both chambers of Congress, would extend the vote to a largely Democratic population.

To pass, a constitutional amendment must be approved by two-thirds of both the House and Senate and then ratified within seven years by three-quarters of the states.

"My own frank opinion is that this is something that is a symbolic gesture," said Paul Leary, professor emeritus of political science at the University of the Virgin Islands. "People are unhappy that they don't get to vote, they don't really understand why, and the delegate is running for re-election."

Former Virgin Islands delegate Ron de Lugo, who introduced similar measures in the 1980s and '90s in order to draw attention to the territories, doubts the measure will actually obtain the vote—but says he lauds the effort.

"Anything that can make anyone a little more aware of the fact that the United States has territories and commonwealths and free associated states, and U.S. citizens that reside there, and provide soldiers to the armed forces is positive," he said.

NMC

From Page 1

and Universities—over its inability to correct finance-related problems and failure to comply with certain accreditation standards.

Quitugua said that based on NMC's account, funding "is just part of the problem."

"Funding is not the entire problem. There's also audit, lack of notification about La Fiesta," he said.

WASC's Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, which placed NMC on warning status last January and retained the same status despite NMC's submission of needed reports last June, expressed concern over NMC's purchase of the La Fiesta complex in San Roque, citing its lack of resources to maintain two campuses.

Early in July this year, WASC's Senior College Commission issued a warning to NMC for non-compliance with standards, as had been cited by ACCJC.

Christian-Christensen acknowledges the challenges

"I'm not saying it's an easy process, but I think it's a very clear process," Christian-Christensen said. "We intend to move it forward, really. This is not just a message bill. It's not just window dressing in a political year. ... I think that you will see a very concerted effort by the territories at the beginning of next year to have this done."

Christian-Christensen drew cheers last month at the Democratic National Convention with a call for a nation "where all Americans, in the states or its offshore areas, can vote as every other American does for our commander-in-chief." Gov. Charles Turnbull, also at the convention, joined the call for the presidential vote.

Residents of Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, American Samoa, Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands—including those who have moved there from the mainland United States—do not vote for president. The first four each send a single non-voting delegate to the House of Representatives.

The effort is reminiscent of a federal lawsuit filed in Puerto Rico before the 2000 elections by a pro-statehood attorney who argued that islanders were entitled as U.S. citizens to vote for president. A federal judge agreed, and ordered the government to prepare ballots. But the decision was reversed on appeal.

Gregorio Igartua de la Rosa, the attorney who filed the lawsuit, says he supports the right of U.S. citizens to vote for president, but amending the Constitution is both slow and unnecessary.

"We don't have to wait for a constitutional amendment," said Igartua, who has filed another lawsuit on the issue. "We already have the right, and the court can give us that right."

In contrast to Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands—a quiet island group of 110,000 residents that was purchased peacefully from Denmark in 1917—seems an unlikely hothouse for change. But Christian-Christensen says she believes her proposed amendment enjoys broad support.

"It hasn't been a burning issue, but it comes up a lot," she said. "This is a very fundamental right. I think it is a right that all U.S. citizens should have."

The SCC's warning has put the college's four-year elementary education program—its only baccalaureate program—at risk.

"The Senior College Commission is deeply concerned about the institution's ongoing capacity and ability to sustain the quality of its academic programs, especially the baccalaureate education program," said CSCU executive director Ralph A. Wolff in a July 2, 2004, letter.

In a related matter, Quitugua said that NMC is asking anew for \$350,000 from the Executive Branch to finance the operation of its La Fiesta property until December this year.

Quitugua said that Friday's meeting with NMC officials also focused on Pell Grants. The NMC has been on reimbursement status with the Pell Grant fund release due to its failure to submit accurate application data.

"NMC is still under reimbursement and will continue to be there until it has submitted three batches of cleared documents," said Quitugua.

GOVT

From Page 1

typhoon," said Babauta during the signing ceremony.

Babauta noted that the CNMI would be eligible for a 90-10 fund sharing if total damage cost exceeds the threshold.

"Right now, if total cost is \$4 million, CNMI share is about \$1 million. If we go above that, we'd be entitled to apply for a 90-10 sharing. I'm pretty sure we'd receive that amount," said the governor in an interview.

Governor's authorized representative Vicky Villagomez said that preliminary damage estimate was \$3.8 million.

"It's going to be higher when we look at the state level," she said.

Babauta said the presidential emer-

Business

Asia



World

tribune graduation ad

Overdrive

T

joeten motors truck
CMYK

Life & Style

Sneakers are going back to cool



By JANELLE ERLICHMAN DIAMOND
THE WASHINGTON POST

Back to school means spanking new notebooks, clothes and shoes. Clogs, boots, Mary Janes, moccasins and loafers are all school-worthy. But this time, pick the sneaker for its good looks and comfort.

This season's sneak is prettier and more stylish than those of the past and certainly not meant for a hard run on the playground. It can be paired with pants, skirts or dresses. Many are

suede—with color (lots of metallic), mesh, embroidery or a mix-and-match combination.

"Consumers are more sophisticated and savvy to designers," says Jon Wexler, U.S. manager for Adidas Originals footwear. They are looking for clean looks and the sneaker version of the low-heeled, point-toe pump: Whimsical and sensible.

Adidas Originals—they make old hip again—has turned its Okapi into an everyday shoe. "You'd never know that it's a 1973 track shoe," says Wexler. Unless you are running late for class.

Clockwise from top: Ralph Lauren Polo Sport (\$69); Converse for Lady Foot Locker All Star (\$45); Banana Republic two-tone sneaker (\$68); red and pink Diesel Aquila Oxford (\$94); Adidas Originals Okapi track shoe (\$70); nylon and suede polka dot sneaker (\$78) and Cirrus canvas high-top with embroidery (\$158), at Anthropologie.

THE WASHINGTON POST

Latin alternative music building fans

SAN DIEGO (AP)—The biggest names in Latin music may come from the well-defined worlds of polished pop, tropical salsa, or the accordion-infused rhythms of Mexican regional.

But when it comes to young Latinos, the diverse genre of Latin Alternative is hitting the mark. Even though it still has trouble penetrating the radio waves, the edgy sounds of Spanish rock, electronica, hip-hop and ska are filling concert halls from Santa Ana to Santiago.

Organizers of the Latin Alternative Music Conference, which opens in Los Angeles on Aug. 11, say faulty research and reliance on established artists has many record labels and marketing companies overlooking not just a hot trend, but some great music.

"Latinos are many different things. That's why it's so hard to talk to us, and to market to us," says Tomas Cookman, music promoter and co-founder of the conference, known as the LAMC, which is in its fifth year.

"Mexicans are Mexicans. Co-

lombians are Colombian. And yes, there are certain issues that unite us. ... Latin alternative has wide appeal."

The LAMC has emerged as the top showcase for up-and-coming acts. This year's conference, which is holding satellite concerts in New York and Toronto, features performances by singer Andrea Echeverri of the Grammy-winning Colombian group Aterciopelados, as well as Latin-alt veterans Los Lobos and a long list of newer names.

Based in Los Angeles for a second year, following three years in New York, more than 1,000 industry leaders and tens of thousands of fans are expected to attend the slate of concerts, panels and exhibitions, which this year include film, comedy and art.

LAMC "is the big event for Latin alternative," says Leila Cobo, who is Latin America/Miami bureau chief for Billboard Magazine. "You've certainly seen people who've started in those showcases become important acts and that's a very cool thing."

"If LAMC were not there, the movement would suffer—a lot," she says.

Past LAMC performers include the heavyweights of the genre, including Mexico City innovators Cafe Tacuba and world traveler Manu Chao. Then there's Julieta Venegas, a petite accordion maestra with a power-chord voice who grew up in Tijuana, Mexico, and Southern California and this year is a multi-Grammy nominee.

Mexico alt-rocker Ely Guerra will make a repeat performance, along with Echeverri, at a free concert at the Santa Monica Pier showcasing women of rock en espanol.

Guerra's first LAMC performance, in New York, garnered media acclaim that has continued to pay off, she said recently during a break from a tour along the U.S.-Mexico border. "It was there that everything took off. It was important, very important for our career."

Latin rock "is growing and we must continue to go for it,

and continue taking advantage of this opportunity that Spanish is a language that today, in the whole world, has an important position," she said.

The LAMC, however, is not limited to purely Spanish-language artists.

Kemo, a Los Angeles rapper who hit success with his former band Delinquent Habits, mixes Spanish, English and Spanglish slang. Though he's seen his records sell in the hundreds of thousands, and the band's songs have been featured in commercials, Kemo says commercial radio remains elusive for Latin alternative music.

"It's neither here nor there, it's almost like the marketing geniuses don't know what to do with it," he says. "They're still trying to figure it out how to bottle it up and put it out there."

Cookman says radio programmers and record label executives are using outdated methods to research their target audiences, such as surveying Latinos in certain neighborhoods or shopping centers.

How to wear it

By SARA SWITZER
SPECIAL TO THE WASHINGTON POST

Q: I am going on vacation this summer and the trip will involve a lot of walking. However, I really don't want to wear sneakers with every outfit. Are there any cute sandals or other summer shoes out there that are comfortable enough to take, or am I just fantasizing?

A: You have lots of great options (as opposed to if you were going camping, in which case I'd just recommend getting a pair of hiking boots). A personal favorite: an adorable metallic thong by Michael Kors (\$150)—it's part Birkenstock, part disco, and its ergonomic sole makes it very comfortable.

Then, I don't know how you feel about the real thing—Birkenstocks, that is—but they're heaven for walking and considered far more stylish than they used to be. You could go with the two-strap Arizona Birki (\$100) or kick it up with the Gizeh (\$75). There's also the company's Curacao style (\$90), a slip-on souped up with gold nylon straps.

Check out Rieker's anti-stress shoes, too—they tend to look better on actual Europeans, but their padded footbeds are designed for walking. For something a bit more substantial, and pricier, Prada Sport makes a leather ballet flat (\$295) that combines the support of a sneaker with the look of a dressier shoe.



THE WASHINGTON POST

Looking for both style and comfort? Birkenstocks are heaven for walking and considered far more stylish than they used to be. Here, the Gizeh sandal (\$75).

Q: During my pregnancy, I'll need business attire for exactly one week, when I'm seven months along. (I'm attending a trade show.) What should I get?

A: Since this is a one-week need, borrowing is your best, and most economical, bet. Can any recently pregnant career friends help? If not, no problem. Think basic and get pieces you can mix and match a few times. I'd spring for a skirt, a pair of pants, one jacket and a dress—or, if you'd like, a second pair of pants. Stick to black and white for simplicity. Liz Lange's maternity line at Target has a great black shirtdress (\$25) and ebony jersey skirt (\$17), plus a professional-looking maternity blazer (\$30). At JCPenney, you'll find a lovely classic white shirt (\$22) and pants from \$25. Bring a scarf or other accessories along—they'll change your look day-to-day, even if you're wearing basically the same thing.

Q: Who should and shouldn't wear this summer's pleated miniskirts? A friend of mine bought one, and I think I'm being exposed to a little too much of her now.

A: In my opinion, people should be able to throw on whatever makes them feel good. That said, like most articles of clothing, miniskirts work better for certain people than others. The best candidates are willowy, tomboyish types who slip into a mini and make it look sporty and fun. If you have fuller, rounder legs, or ones with Williams-sister-level muscle, the hem can cut you off unflatteringly. If you're way curvy, tiny skirts will always appear very Pam Anderson—fine if that's what you're going for. Super-tall girls might have a similar problem; a mini perched on top of mile-high legs makes you look like you're not wearing much at all. But come fall, this should all be moot: Shorter skirts will be out, out, out and longer, ladylike hemlines in.

Q: I went to an outdoor wedding recently and found that most of the male guests had worn dark-blue suits, yellow ties and blue shirts. I kept thinking, "What time was your meeting?" Couldn't they have worn something besides business suits?

A: I bet that your problem wasn't really with the men's suits—if you ask me, this is still appropriate wedding wear, even in daytime—but with their lack of creativity. A wedding is a social occasion, which necessitates looking as if you have a life away from your cubicle. Experiment with hues and textures: A lightweight summer suit over a colorful shirt, for example, is lovely and appropriate. You don't need to wear a tie, but many men look more polished with one on. Be creative—but don't go overboard. There's nothing like a piano-key pattern or the big Rolling Stones tongue to make that plain yellow tie look oh-so-good.

'Collateral' cruises to top spot

By **DAVID GERMAIN**
AP MOVIE WRITER

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Good guy or bad guy, Tom Cruise is still No. 1. Cruise's "Collateral," in which he plays a psychotic hit man who hijacks a taxi for a one-night killing spree, debuted as the top weekend movie with \$24.4 million, according to studio estimates Sunday.

It was an unusually dark role for Cruise, best known for playing the hero. Jamie Foxx co-stars as the cabbie, while Michael Mann ("Ali," "The Insider") directed.

"Collateral" bumped off the previous weekend's top movie, the fright flick "The Village," which took in \$16.6 million, a steep 67 percent tumble from its opening-weekend receipts. "The Village" pushed its 10-day total to \$85.7 million.

The weekend's other new wide release, the Brittany Murphy romantic comedy "Little Black Book," opened weakly in fifth place with \$7 million.

The overall box office was down sharply. The top 12 movies grossed \$97.7 million, off 23 percent from the same weekend last year, when "S.W.A.T." and "Freaky Friday" both opened strongly.

"This is why they call it the dog days of August," said Paul Dergarabedian, president of box-office tracker Exhibitor Relations. "Summers always surprise you. They either slow down at the end or they peak at the end."

Summer revenues remain about 6 percent ahead of 2003's, when Hollywood took in a record \$3.9 billion from early May through Labor Day weekend.

While the R-rated "Collateral" did only about half the opening-weekend business of Cruise's "Mission: Impossible" movies, its debut was in line with his last two R-rated films, 2003's "The Last Samurai" (\$24.3

million) and 2001's "Vanilla Sky" (\$25 million).

The "Mission: Impossible" movies were rated PG-13, opening the audience to

according to distributor DreamWorks, and upcoming releases such as "Princess Diaries 2: Royal Engagement" and "Alien vs. Predator" appeal to younger crowds.

"This one has the opportunity to continue to play," said Jim Tharp, DreamWorks head of distribution. "I don't think there's direct competition especially for the older audience until late September."

In limited release, the shark tale "Open Water" debuted strongly with \$1.04 million in just 47 theaters. The low-budget film is inspired by the true story of a couple mistakenly left behind in shark-infested waters during a scuba-diving trip.

Michael Winterbottom's sci-fi drama "Code 46," starring Tim Robbins and Samantha Morton as lovers in a bleak future where travel is severely restricted, had a solid opening of \$22,000 in three theaters.

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at North American theaters, according to Exhibitor Relations Co. Inc. Final figures will be released Monday.

1. **"Collateral,"** \$24.4 million.
2. **"The Village,"** \$16.6 million.
3. **"The Bourne Supremacy,"** \$14.1 million.
4. **"The Manchurian Candidate,"** \$10.8 million.
5. **"Little Black Book,"** \$7 million.
6. **"I, Robot,"** \$6.3 million.
7. **"Spider-Man 2,"** \$5.5 million.
8. **"Harold & Kumar Go to White Castle,"** \$3.2 million.
9. **"A Cinderella Story,"** \$3.05 million.
10. **"Catwoman,"** \$2.9 million.

younger teens.

With good reviews and an older target audience, "Collateral" has potential to hold well at the box office in the coming weeks. Sixty percent of the audience was older than 25,

Lindsay Lohan wins 4 Teen Choice Awards

UNIVERSAL CITY, Calif. (AP)—Lindsay Lohan, who turned 18 last month, collected a leading four awards Sunday night at the 2004 Teen Choice Awards held at the Universal Amphitheater.

Lohan won awards for best movie actress in a comedy, best movie hissy fit and best movie blush for her part in the hit film "Mean Girls." She also collected the award for movie

breakout star actress for her work in both "Mean Girls" and "Freaky Friday."

The awards show was hosted by Paris Hilton and Nicole Richie, while musical guests

included Blink-182, Ashlee Simpson, Lenny Kravitz and JoJo. The show will be broadcast Wednesday on Fox.

A complete list of winners of the 2004 Teen Choice Awards:

Movies:

Date Movie: "50 First Dates."

Movie, Comedy: "Shrek 2."

Movie Actor, Comedy: Adam Sandler, "50 First Dates."

Movie Thriller: "The Texas Chainsaw Massacre."

Movie Actress, Comedy: Lindsay Lohan.

Movie Actress, Drama/Adventure: Halle Berry, "Gothika."

Movie Hissy Fit: Lindsay Lohan, "Mean Girls."

Movie Blush: Lindsay Lohan, "Mean Girls."

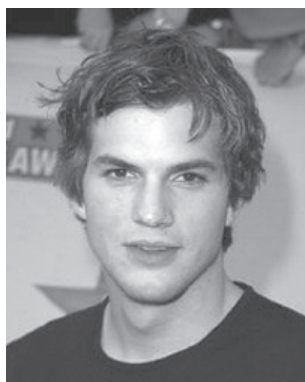
Movie Sleazebag: Seann William Scott, "American Wedding."

Movie Breakout Star Actress: Lindsay Lohan, "Mean Girls," "Freaky Friday."

Movie Your Parents Didn't Want You to See: "American Wedding."



Lindsay Lohan



Ashton Kutcher

Television:

TV Show, Drama/Action Adventure: "The O.C."

TV, Reality/Variety: "Punk'd."

TV Show, Late Night: "Saturday Night Live."

TV Breakout Show: "The O.C."

TV Actress, Drama/Adventure: Jennifer Garner, "Alias."

TV Actor, Drama/Adventure: Adam Brody, "The O.C."

TV Sidekick: Sean Hayes, "Will & Grace."

TV Personality: Ashton Kutcher.

TV Breakout Star, Female: Mischa Barton, "The O.C."

TV Breakout Star, Male: Chad Michael Murray, "One Tree Hill."

Reality/Variety TV Star: Ashton Kutcher, "Punk'd."

Reality/Variety Jackass: Simon Cowell, "American Idol."



Mike Myers

Additional Awards:

Ultimate Choice Award: Mike Myers.

Courage Award: Bethany Hamilton.

Male Athlete: Tony Hawk.

Female Athlete: Mia Hamm.

Comedian: Adam Sandler.

Fresh Face: Ashlee Simpson.

Music:

Single: "Toxic," Britney Spears.

Album: "Confessions," Usher.

R&B Artist: Usher.

R&B Track: "Yeah," Usher with Ludacris and Lil Jon.

Love Song: "I Miss You," Blink-182.

Hook Up: "Yeah," Usher with Ludacris and Lil Jon.

Tour of the Year: No Doubt and Blink-182.

Song of the Summer: "Pieces of Me," Ashlee Simpson.



Britney Spears



AP

Actors Tom Cruise and Jada Pinkett Smith arrive for the "Collateral" film premiere during the Eighth Annual Urbanworld Film Festival Wednesday, Aug. 4, 2004, in New York.

Marriage didn't put a stop to jealous man's fears

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN

DEAR ABBY: "Innocent and Faithful in L.A." told you that she has been in a long-distance relationship with her boyfriend. Although she has been completely devoted to him for two years, he continues to accuse her of seeing other men because he has a "gut feeling" about it. She said he reads her e-mails, and she suspects he has hacked into her computer. She asked if there was "any hope" for their relationship.



Dear Abby

You advised her to keep the relationship long-distance or end it. Oh, how I wish someone had given me that advice before I married my husband.

I felt that if we were married, he would finally be secure and not accuse me of seeing other men. After our wedding, it got worse. It got so bad I would cross the street to avoid speaking to a former classmate; I couldn't even go into the grocery store without him.

After 25 years of marriage, and his having at least two affairs, he finally left me for another woman.

SYMPATHETIC IN HARRISONBURG, VA.

DEAR SYMPATHETIC: It may take counseling to help you recover from 25 years in emotional prison, but I'm glad to know that you're finally free. Read on:

DEAR ABBY: I can tell "Innocent" from firsthand experience that no, there isn't any hope. Nothing she can say will reassure him because his paranoia has nothing to do with her or her behavior; it has only to do with him. If she's smart, she'll dump him.

BEEN THERE IN MONTREAL

DEAR BEEN THERE: I agree with you.

DEAR ABBY: Any time someone constantly accuses you of something (infidelity, lying, etc.) it is time to look into what THAT person may be doing. When we are constantly placed in the position of having to defend ourselves, we often don't take time to look into what the accuser may be doing. If "Innocent" were able to seriously look into his behavior, I'll bet she'd discover he's doing exactly what he's accusing her of.

JANIE IN WASHINGTON

DEAR JANIE: You have insight. There's an old French saying that translates (roughly), "A man doesn't look behind the bedroom door unless he has hidden there himself."

DEAR ABBY: "Innocent" should run as far from that guy as she can. I once had a boyfriend who claimed that I treated everyone—including my pets—better than I treated him. He tried to tell me not to talk to my friends or my children's father. I drew the line when he told me I had to let his abusive cousin come to my apartment to visit.

When I told him to pack his things and get out, he hit me. It only happened once, because I stood up to him. I filed charges and he went to jail. That's when I found out that I wasn't the first. He had been arrested six times for abuse.

Please tell Miss "Innocent" from someone who's been there: Get away before he starts hitting you.

STANDING TALL IN DAYTON, OHIO

DEAR STANDING TALL: You are lucky that you drew the line where you did. Some people are so insecure they cannot function unless they feel completely in control, regardless of how destructive that control may be to the object of their obsession. Once an emotional and verbal abuser becomes physical, it can escalate to homicide.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

To receive a collection of Abby's most memorable—and most frequently requested—poems and essays, send a business-sized, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for \$5 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby—Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included in the price.)

Johnson ordered to pay \$5K grocery tab

ASPEN, Colo. (AP)—Actor Don Johnson has been ordered to pay a grocery store nearly \$6,000 for an unpaid tab.

Pitkin County District Judge Erin Fernandez-Ely said Johnson must pay \$5,470 for his past-due balance at Clark's Market, along with \$426.85 in

interest and court costs of \$101.

Johnson did not file a response to Clark's lawsuit.

In May his 17-acre ranch near Aspen was put on sale amid a bankruptcy filing.

Johnson, who starred in TV's "Miami Vice" and "Nash Bridges" and appeared in the

movie "Tin Cup," bought the ranch 16 years ago, said Joshua Saslove, the real estate broker listing the property.

Los Angeles-based City National Bank sued Johnson in March, seeking to force an auction of the property to recoup \$930,000 it claimed Johnson owed.



Actor Don Johnson is seen in Los Angeles in this Nov. 14, 2001 file photo.

Banned Indian film chronicles violent era

BOMBAY, India (AP)—An award-winning documentary by Rakesh Sharma that chronicles one of India's most painful episodes of Hindu-Muslim violence has been banned by state censors who said it could trigger more unrest.

Sharma said Friday he would approach the Bombay High Court to challenge the ruling on the film, "Final Solution," which has footage of sobbing women, burning homes and angry mobs along with speeches of Hindu nationalists.

"People who make hate speeches should be banned and not the filmmaker who records it," he told The Associated Press.

The film records the 2002 religious rioting in the western

state of Gujarat, which killed more than 1,000 people, most of whom were Muslims. The riots broke when Hindu mobs set off a wave of revenge killings after the burning of a train that left 60 Hindus dead. The attack was blamed on Muslims, but government agencies investigating the incident have not been able to confirm that.

The censor board said in a two-page that the documentary was "highly provocative and may trigger off unrest and communal violence." Singapore also banned the film from its film festival.

Anand Patwardhan, a veteran documentary filmmaker, said the film must be released in India "as a warning against genocide because it shows how this could happen anywhere."



CATWOMEN

Stars of the film Sharon Stone, left, and Halle Berry arrive for the European premiere of their new movie Catwoman in London Tuesday Aug. 3, 2004.

Daniels won't play 9/11 song in Mich. town

DEARBORN, Mich. (AP)—Charlie Daniels will not perform a song criticized by Arab-Americans when he appears at a weekend festival in this Detroit-area community, the center of southeastern Michigan's 300,000-member Arab-American community.

Daniels wrote and recorded "This Ain't No Rag, It's a Flag" after the Sept. 11 terror attacks. It became a country hit, but critics said it refers to a slur against Arabs.

The song begins: "This ain't no rag, it's a flag and we don't wear it on our heads. It's a symbol of the land where the good guys live. Are you listening to what I said?"

"Ragheads" is a derogatory term for Arabs, Muslims and others who wear turbans or cover their heads.

The Charlie Daniels Band is to perform Saturday night at the

city-sponsored Dearborn Homecoming. Expressions of concern from Arab-American groups prompted Dearborn officials to contact Daniels, who said he never intended to perform the song at the three-day community event, city spokeswoman Mary Laundroche said Friday.

Daniels told the Detroit Free Press in an interview Wednesday that the song isn't directed at Arabs and Muslims, but at turbaned terrorists such as Osama bin Laden.

"The only thing it's 'anti' is the people who bombed us on 9/11. I have people who say you're putting down people who wear turbans. I'm not," Daniels, 67, told the newspaper. "There are good Arabs and bad Arabs, good Greeks and bad Greeks, good people and bad people in any race."

Virginia Grey dies at 87

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Actress Virginia Grey, whose film career began in 1927 with "Uncle Tom's Cabin" and stretched through the 1970s with "Airport" and television roles, has died. She was 87.

Grey died July 31 at the Motion Picture and Television Fund's home and hospital facility in suburban Woodland Hills, a fund spokeswoman said Friday. Heart failure was listed as the cause of death.

The versatile actress appeared in more than 100 movies and 40 TV shows that included musicals, comedies, Westerns and dramas. She usually played a supporting role to stars such as Joan Crawford and Betty Grable.

Ann Rutherford, who appeared with Grey in "Whistling in the Dark" and other films, told The New York Times that Grey was a "nifty lady."

"She was blond and lovely," Rutherford recalled. "The camera adored her. There was not a bad angle to her face."

Her ability to play a variety of roles, whether "the girl next door or somebody's other woman," was what kept her on the screen, Rutherford said.

Grey, a Los Angeles native, gained early exposure to the film industry through her father, Ray Grey, an actor and assistant director. At age 10, Virginia Grey was encouraged by her mother to audition for "Uncle Tom's Cabin" and won the role of Little Eva.

She finished her schooling and, from 1931, worked steadily in films including "Gold Diggers of 1935" and 1939's "Idiot's Delight" with Clark Gable, whom she dated. Later films included "So This Is New York," "All That Heaven Allows" and "Airport" in 1970.

McCready charged with drug fraud

FRANKLIN, Tenn. (AP)—Country singer Mindy McCready has been charged with prescription drug fraud after authorities said she used a fake prescription to obtain the pain medicine OxyContin.

McCready, 28, was arrested Thursday at her home in Nashville by agents with the 21st Judicial Drug Task Force, according to the Williamson County Sheriff's Department.

Authorities say McCready presented a fraudulent prescription for OxyContin at a pharma-

cy on Feb. 12, paid for the drugs and then left. Investigators later learned that McCready was not a patient at the doctor's office from which the prescription purportedly originated.

McCready was booked into the county jail and held on \$10,000 bond. She posted bail and was released the same day.

The singer had a No. 1 hit in 1996 with "Guys Do It All the Time." Her other hits include "Ten Thousand Angels" and "A Girl's Gotta Do (What a Girl's Gotta Do)."

Pastimes

Shannon Essenpreis wins Jr. Miss crown

MOBILE, Ala. (AP)—Texan Shannon Essenpreis was crowned America's Junior Miss after belting out a Broadway showtune and soaring through interviews with her "bubbly" personality.

Though Essenpreis was crowned Saturday night, television viewers won't see it until July as producers switch to a "reality TV" format. PAX Network camera crews followed the 50 contestants for two weeks leading up to Saturday's contest.

Essenpreis was among five finalists who were given on-the-spot questions tailored to their individual interests. She was asked how she would use the enthusiasm she's displayed as her school's mascot into her planned career as a broadcast journalist.

"I was so nervous," she said after the show. "And the question was so long that by the end of it, I wasn't sure what they were asking me."

Her answer? She'll report on the positive aspects of life while maintaining her personal optimism.

After the contest, Heisman Trophy winner and Junior Miss judge Herschel Walker said he was particularly impressed with Essenpreis' charm and "bubbly" character in her interview last week. Essenpreis won a \$50,000 scholarship.



Singh wins Buick Open, outlasting Daly

By LARRY LAGE
AP SPORTS WRITER

BUICK GRAND BLANC,

Mich. (AP)—Vijay Singh outlasted John Daly with a 5-under 67 Sunday to win the Buick Open with a 23-under 265 for his fourth victory of the year and 19th of his career. Daly, vying for a second win in one year for the first time, finished a stroke back after shooting a 66 and bogeying the 18th hole.

Tiger Woods started the day three strokes behind Singh, and pulled within a stroke while

shooting a 66. He finished at 21 under, two strokes behind the winner and tied with Carlos Franco (67) for third.

Woods will look to snap his streak without a major at nine in two weeks at the PGA Championship.

Defending champion Jim Furyk, who shared the second-round lead with Singh, finished tied for sixth at 17 under after shooting a 68 on Sunday.

The final round turned into a virtual match-play between Singh and Daly, one of the top golfers in the world against one of the most popular.

Singh's bogey at 18 created an opportunity for Daly to force a playoff, but Daly was unable to take advantage of the break.

Singh is just the third two-time Buick Open champion, and the first since Julius Boros won at Warwick Hills a second time in 1967.

Entering the tournament, Singh had 10 top-10 finishes. But since winning consecutive tournaments three months ago, he has just two top-five finishes and was tied for 28th at the U.S. Open and 20th at the British Open.

The Fijian played well this week after changing his putter,



Vijay Singh of Fiji watches his tee shot on the eighth hole at the Buick Open at Warwick Hills Golf & Country Club in Grand Blanc, Mich., Sunday, Aug. 1, 2004.

going back to a standard putter after using a long one for 2 1/2 years. He also said earlier in the week that he stopped worrying about chasing Woods in the world rankings.

Woods is No. 1 in the world rankings, and Singh is third.

Singh won his seventh straight tournament when he at least shared the lead after 54 holes, dating to the 2002 Shell Houston open.

With Singh, Daly and Woods atop the leaderboard entering the final round, it was a Buick

Open unlike any other.

A sea of fans waiting at the first tee roared when Daly was introduced and just politely clapped for Singh, who seemed to get a kick out of the rock-star like reception for Daly.

As they walked down the first

fairway, Singh patted Daly on the back and both chuckled and shook their heads, fans hooted and hollered best wishes toward Daly in a preview of what was to come over the next four hours.

Singh was wild off the tee at times, but made a handful of shots over and around trees. His first drive landed in the 10th fairway, but unfazed by his blind shot over trees, Singh scrambled well enough to start with a birdie.

And Daly did, too.

Daly made an eagle from 142 yards at the par-4 No. 2, causing the crowd to erupt with applause as he pulled into a tie at 19 under.

He took the lead with a birdie on the third hole and kept a one-shot lead until Singh's birdie at No. 12 knotted them up at 22 under.

Singh went ahead by a shot with a birdie at 14—to reach 23 under—and was able to maintain a one-shot edge the rest of the way.

He got into trouble on the final hole, but his second shot out of the rough landed on the green close enough to set up two-putt, which was just enough to win because Daly missed a makable par putt.

Lions sign first-round pick Roy Williams



ALLEN PARK, Mich. (AP)—Receiver Roy Williams agreed to a five-

year contract with the Detroit Lions on Sunday.

The seventh overall pick in the draft out of Texas, Williams was the lone Lions player who did not report when the team began training camp Friday. He remained in the area while the deal was being negotiated, however, and arrived at camp Sunday afternoon.

He spent the remainder of the day in orientation meetings and video sessions.

"We were able to get this done in about 48 hours," Detroit chief operating officer Tom Lewand said. "We're happy we were able to get it done and get it done quickly."

Williams will be in uniform Monday when the Lions resume practice.

Terms of the contract were not disclosed but the five-year deal is a year shorter than those given to quarterback Joey Harrington and receiver Charles Rogers, the top picks in the 2002 and '03 drafts, respectively. Harrington was taken third overall, while Rogers was the second overall selection.

Williams caught 70 passes for 1,079 yards and nine touchdowns as a senior at Texas last season. He finished his career with 241 catches, 3,866 yards and 36 touchdowns, all of which were school records.

The team hopes he and Rogers can team to give Harrington a tall and speedy receiving tandem to help spark a club that has compiled the NFL's worst record in the last three seasons.

Brown wants to move past suspensions

By ROY KAMMERER
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

COLOGNE, Germany (AP)—Larry Brown wants to move on. The U.S. Olympic basketball coach said Sunday that the suspension of Allen Iverson, LeBron James and Amare Stoudemire is forgotten. He would rather focus on a tough road trip against some of Europe's top teams leading up the Athens Olympics.

Brown refused to let Iverson, James and Stoudemire play in the team's 96-71 win over Puerto Rico on Saturday, punishment for the trio showing up late for a team meeting.

"It won't happen again. They'll play the next game and some will start," Brown said.

The U.S. squad arrived in Germany on Sunday, shook off the jet lag and held its first practice.

And Brown is having some second thoughts about whether this series of exhibitions, which includes a game against world champion Serbia and Montenegro, is ideal for his team.

That's a switch from last year, when he was eager for the trip after the U.S. team romped through Olympic qualifying in Puerto Rico with a 10-0 record. Since then, however, veterans from that team, including Mike Bibby, Tracy McGrady and Ray Allen, have bailed out.

Now, Brown is drilling the youngest U.S. Olympic team, with an average age of 23.6 years, since NBA players were first allowed into the 1992 Games.



James, Dwyane Wade and Carmelo Anthony may be talented, but they are newcomers to basketball abroad. The team played together just one week, and many players will need a crash course in the different rules of the international game.

Brown thought the team had put all that behind them in Puerto Rico.

"We thought that team would be playing. We thought we had laid the foundation," Brown said. "Now I think maybe we can use the practice."

The U.S. team faces Italy on Tuesday, followed by Germany and Dirk Nowitzki on Wednesday. Then it plays two more away games against Serbia and Montenegro and Turkey, whose NBA players include Utah's Mehmet Okur.

"I hope this trip will competitively toughen us up," Brown said.

Sunday's practice, during which Brown worked on some plays, was a closed session in a sweltering small gym. Only a handful of reporters were let in to watch a late shootaround and talk to the players.

That will be different against Italy and Germany. The NBA stars, often still called "The Dream Team" abroad, have awakened huge interest.

From across the world, the

German organizers of the exhibition game said more than 500 media sought accreditation for the two games, with around 350 gaining approval. That's about a 100 more than followed the U.S. team's training camp in Jacksonville.

While handling the growing hoopla, Brown will have to get his young team used to the international game's wider lanes, the different calls from referees, the shortened 3-point line, along with schooling them in some simple plays.

All that will be needed to offset the American's disadvantage, which proved so costly at the world championships in Indianapolis, where it was beaten three times and finished sixth.

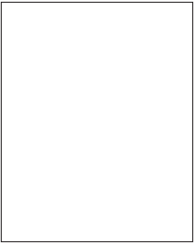
While the U.S. squad has three short weeks to forge a cohesive team, other world powers like Argentina and Serbia and Montenegro have players who have been on the court together for years.

Not that the Americans and their young stars are worried.

Anthony has already boldly predicted a gold medal, while James said he isn't concerned about upholding the American's 24-0 mark since NBA players were allowed in the Olympics.

"There's no pressure at all," James said. "If we get better and do our job, we have a great chance of accomplishing our goals."

U.S. coach Larry Brown, right, sends in a play with guard Stephon Marbury during an Olympic tuneup against Puerto Rico, Saturday, July 31, 2004, in Jacksonville, Fla. The U.S. team won 96-71.

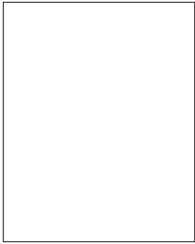


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